

Matthew 3:1-17

The Kings Ministry Begins

Intro: 25 Year gap between Chapters 2 and 3!

A) Bethlehem to Egypt to Nazareth – 25 yrs living in obscurity - Carpenter

B) THE SON OF A CARPENTER.

C) Now all the gospel writers **signal the beginning of the ministry of Jesus** with the arrival of John the Baptist on the scene.

1) 2ND COUSIN TO JESUS

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.”

John was the son of a priest – Zacharias – Luke – John would have been in training for the priesthood himself.

A) By age 30 serving in the temple: John opted for a different calling – **MESSENGER** – THE VOICE.....

B) Priest duties were a bit routine – there was some regiment to it and some precise responsibilities in the temple

C) A messenger’s days were different – He had to daily get his marching orders from the Lord.

D) He wasn’t interested in RITUAL as much as He was in hearing from the Lord
1) and then boldly proclaiming the message he had been given.

All four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, quote the 40th Chapter of Isaiah – the prophet’s prophecy in introducing John – THE VOICE

A) You thought that was a Singing Show – NO – DESCRIPTION OF JOHN the messenger of God. – The Front man for Jesus.

B) In John's Gospel, it says the representatives from Jerusalem came and they asked John the Baptizer some questions.

1) They said, **"Are you the Christ?"** and he said, "Nope, I'm not."

C) And they said **"Well, are you Elijah?"** because the Bible predicted Elijah to come.

He goes, "Nope, I'm not Elijah either."

1) And they said **"Are you that prophet?"** Quoting from the prediction in Deuteronomy that God would send another prophet like Moses.

D) And he says, "No, three strikes your out, I'm not any of those guys."

He said, "Let me tell you who I am. **I'm a voice, a voice of one crying in the desert. Get right with God or make the way of the Lord straight.**"

A) My Role is to point people to Jesus!

B) **I need to decrease – he might increase**

C) Now there is another reason why the people wondered if John was Elijah

1) HE SORT OF RESEMBLED ELIJAH IN HIS APPEARANCE.

➤ 2 Kings Ch. 1 describes Elijah as a Hairy man – big leather belt.

4 Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Locust: Type of Grass hopper! – Some have tried to downplay this – suggest John was eating Carob pods – all the chocolate lovers.

A) Carob doesn’t grow in that region - He was eating bugs.

B) Just in case you are interested: Leviticus 11:22 – regulations for eating insects

Of them you may eat: the locust of any kind, the bald locust of any kind,

C) So you Need to look at it close make sure – it is bald and doesn’t just have a receding hair line the cricket of any kind, and the grasshopper of any kind. ²³ But all other winged insects that have four feet are detestable to you.

D) So if you are craving locust – Fry them — sauté them in butter

1) Assyrians dried them – made like chips for travel – good protein

John's ministry consisted of an Announcement – an Exhortation – A Baptism – A REBUKE and A PROMISE!

A) THE ANNOUNCEMENT – V.2 The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

➤ **Major theme – Matthew's gospel – 32 times**

B) Noted on Sunday – Simple definition: The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God – synonymous –

1) Simple definition: The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. God's rule and reign or God's presence amongst men – God's agenda is His Kingdom

C) The Kingdom of heaven was at hand, because the KING OF HEAVEN – Jesus had showed up – invaded our planet

D) And at this stage in His life – Jesus had stepped out the shadows of the carpenters shop to make his public appearance among men.

John the voice of one crying in the wilderness – V.1 Preaching = to herald or proclaim –

Announcement – The Kingdom.....at Hand.

A) HIS EXHORTATION: TWOFOLD – REPENT and Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'

B) Kings arrival send an Advance man: His job was to Prepare the people – prepare the roads – passage ways

1) Easy progress for the arriving King

C) John said: My Job is to help prepare the passage way of people's hearts to receive the messiah.

D) Call people to repentance. – Repent = Change of mind – Change of heart

1) Think differently about their spiritual condition.

Interesting that John begins his ministry preaching repentance

A) Jesus also began his ministry preaching repentance – Matthew 4:17

➤ From that time on Jesus began to preach, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.

Peter: Acts 2:38 – Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Paul Acts 20:21 – I (Paul) have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Jesus writing to the 7 churches in Asia minor - Revelation Ch. 2,3 Jesus to the churches of Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, & Laodicea... **Repent!**

Luke: Acts 17:30 – In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

The message of repentance is not one that we hear very often today in many church circles. – Why?

A) To many it is an uncomfortable message: - People don't like to think of themselves as sinners.

B) The Bible says – All sinned – NOT ME – not a sinner – I am a good person

1) Sinners are really bad people. ISIS – those guys are sinners –

2) Child molesters Murders – Criminals convicted and sent to prison = SINNERS

C) Not me! – Churches today: Don't tell people sinners – don't tell them unrighteous

1) Think of it this way: Righteousness = PERFECTION – so unrighteousness would be anything that is not PERFECT –

D) Are you perfect? My husband says I am! – I know the truth!

E) So repentance is simply having a change of mind about my spiritual condition.

It is recognizing I am a sinner and I need a savior.

A) I need to turn from my sin – and turn to Jesus.

B) Now if someone already realizes I am a sinner – I am a mess – I need a savior – then we just point them to Jesus.

1) But some people don't understand that they are sinners – they need a savior – so a Change of mind in in order. Change in their thinking

C) So that was John's exhortation - AND PEOPLE WERE RECEIVING IT

V.5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea and all the region around Jordan went out to him.

1) He didn't go to them.

D)It says,v.6 **"They were baptized by him in the Jordan confessing their sins.**

JOHN'S BAPTISM

A)Baptism did not begin as a Christian ritual. Its origin is not in the New Testament. It comes as a Jewish ritual.

B)GENTILE who wanted to convert to Judaism!

1)You had to go through a certain series of things in order to convert.

- #1 you had to be taught Judaism by a Scribe.
- #2 if you were a male, you had to be circumcised no matter what age you were.
- #3 Ritual cleansing – immersion in water

D)Once you did all of those things, you would eventually be allowed into the community of Judaism.

1)So Baptism was part of the process for a gentile converting to Judaism

Baptism was also part of the process for a Jewish person who wanted to go and worship at the temple.

A)There was a purification process involved in making a person “spiritually fit” to worship in the temple area.

B)There was a Baptism that was part of the purification process for people who had been healed of certain diseases and or had open sores that had healed.

C)But John's Baptism was different from that – it had to do with people confessing their sins – and was part of their repentance.

1)Symbolic or a heart cleansing they were desiring
2)It was an outward way of acknowledging – Ready to follow God!!!!

Baptism today: Acts 2:38 – Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A)Mark 16:16 – And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved

B)Believe is first – Baptism follows as the Outward expression of an inward work –

1)Also symbolizes – Death and Resurrection

Verse 7, when he saw many of the **Pharisees and Sadducees** coming to his baptism, now stop right there.

A)You need to know who these guys are because they're going to come up throughout the Gospels and in the Book Acts.

B) Pharisees -There were only about 6,000 Pharisees at the of Christ in Judaism

1)The word Pharisee comes from a Hebrew word which means separated ones.

C)They believed that they were separated from the rest of the Jews – that they were the favored ones,

1)the holy ones because they attended to every little fine point of the law.

D)They were very structured, they were very legalistic and in the Gospels they have confrontations with Jesus.

The Sadducees were more liberal – they denied the existence of angels and spirits and they didn't believe in a bodily resurrection – Sad U See !

A)They were an even smaller group than the Pharisees – but they were the rich MINORITY – they had control of the temple mount area.

B)They were the one's who ran the Bazaar in the temple courtyard –

1)Jesus goes to cleanse – turn over tables....house of prayer – den of thieves

C)Interesting the Pharisees and the Sadducees didn't like each other at all – hated each other

1)But they were united in their hatred of Jesus

D)It seems that these guys were a delegation that the Sanhedrin the ruling elder council of the Jews in Jerusalem

1)had sent down to the place where John was to check him out, to listen to him, find out what's up with this guy.

E)HIS REBUKE

So, this group comes to John the Baptist out in the wilderness.

A) John the Baptist is not friendly toward this group that comes out.

Aa) He calls them V.7 "**Brood of vipers.**" Brood means offspring.

B) You sons of slimy snakes would be a better translation.

1) LOVE JOHN!!!!!!

C) Now, a viper was considered very shrewd but very dangerous.

1) All you guys look so slick and so religious but you are so dangerous.

D) You are sons or a brood or offspring of vipers. And then he says, "**Brood of vipers.**" "**Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance.**"

Now this also gives us another insight into Repentance: Repentance is not just a change of mind – not just sorrow for sin – admittance

A) True repentance is going to be seen in ACTIONS – or fruit

B) Not saying at all – that a person has to clean up their lives before coming to Christ. –

1) WE COME AS WE ARE. WE LET JESUS CHANGE US -

C) BUT IN TRUE CONVERSION – Evidence of that Change is going to be seen over time.

1) No fruit – you have to question.

And as believers – when we are confronted with sin – True repentance in our lives is going to be marked by Fruit – Change

A) Paul makes this very clear in writing to the Corinthians about a matter that they needed to repent of.

B) 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹ For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner:

What **diligence it** produced in you, **what clearing of yourselves**, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

C) John is calling these religious leaders to that type of action – turn from their legalism and Hypocrisy.

He continues: V.9 And do not think to say to yourselves we have Abraham as our father for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."

A) What does he mean by that? Stones in the Jordan from the days of Joshua - Monument that many believe was still visible

B) Application for us: Our standing with God is not based on our ancestry or our religious affiliation or our tithing record – nothing like that?

1) It is solely based on our hearts and our relationship with God.

C) John continues by NOTING the urgency of the matter.

Verse 10. "**Even now, the axe is laid to the root of the trees.**" Therefore, every tree which does not bear fruit, is cut down and thrown into the fire.

The axe is at the root!

A) Listen Fruit is connected to the Root issue. – If the root is bad the fruit is going to be bad.

B) Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks – reveals the root

C) The Lord is always concerned about the ROOT ISSUE.

1) We tend to focus on systems – they said this or he did that –

D) But there is a **ROOT CAUSE** connected to that behavior.

E) Jesus is always FOCUSED on getting to the root of our Sin

1) Our pride – rebellion – our trust issues because we have been hurt

So we have seen John's ministry: Announcement – Exhortation – Baptism

His Rebuke – Now we see THE PROMISE.

V.11 I indeed baptize with water unto repentance but He who is coming after me is mightier than I whose sandal I am not worthy to carry." He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

One thing we always notice about John the Baptist. He points to his cousin Jesus all the time.

A)He always points to Him. He's the one.

B)You're asking about who I am. I'm just a voice. He's the word. I'm just a messenger.

1)He's the message.

C)Now to me that adds to his testimony and the weight and authenticity of his testimony.

How many of you would say of your cousin? My cousin is God. My cousin takes away the sin of the world?

A)No, you know your cousin. You've hang out with your cousins. You fought with your cousins.

B)John the Baptist believed that his second cousin Jesus was the one,

C)In comparison to him – John says: "I'm not even worthy to take off his sandal."

1)The job of the lowest servant in a household was that of the foot washer

D)**Take off his masters sandals** – when came home – wash feet.

E)John says- This is how much greater he is than me – "I'm not even worthy to take off his sandal."

V.11 I indeed baptize with water unto repentance but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

A)This is the promise of the New Covenant – Jesus would bring

Ezekiel 36:26,27

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*."

John says: I Baptize for repentance – turning from Sin –

A)But my cousin he is going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit - Empower you to live for Jesus.

B) Baptism = immersed – filled to over flowing:

C)Types of baptism the New Testament speaks of: 1st into the body of Christ

When a person places their faith in Jesus –

A)they are immediately baptized or immersed into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.

B)So 1st Baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ –

1)Immersed into the body of Christ – part of His body – His family – our position

C)Taken out of darkness – brought into the Light

Then we follow that up with being baptized in water – Identification with Jesus

A)Outward profession – inward work – that symbolized – death and Resurrection

B)**That is Water baptism**: So Baptized by the Holy Spirit – for when saved – immersed into the body of Christ

1)Baptized immersed in water – IDENTIFICATION

C)But John was speaking here of another Baptism: Jesus will Baptize with the Holy Spirit. –

1)THIS IS FOR POWER

D)POWER TO SERVE – POWER TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Jesus after the Resurrection spoke to His disciples and said this: Acts 1:4

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Clarified it even more in V.8 when he declared – But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The Holy Spirit baptizing us (immerses us) into the body of Christ at Conversion

Jesus though baptizes us WITH the Holy Spirit when we ask Him –

A) Filled to overflowing for Power = Dunamis – Dynamic power!

B) This is the promise: When My cousin comes and His work is completed He will do for you what I nor any other prophet could ever do.

C) Ephesians 5:18 – Be continually being filled – Life in the New Covenant – constant dependency on His power – His grace

Verse 12, "His winnowing fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor and gather his wheat into barn, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire."

A) John is telling us that JESUS' ministry will be one of Separation

B) The winnowing fan was the instrument they used for separating the wheat from the chaff.

They would use it to pick up the Wheat and throw it into the air.

A) The wheat being heavier would fall to the ground – where as the chaff would blow away –

B) SEPARATION – up down up down

C) Eventually the chaff would be gathered up and thrown into the fire in order to be burned.

John is telling us that the ministry of Jesus is going to be a Dividing Ministry.

A) Jesus said a similar thing: Not peace but a sword: Separate – This is inevitable –

B) Can't follow Jesus and be liked by everyone – IT IS Impossible

C) John is a good example of that – He says it like it is.

1) There were many who heard and were baptized – but also others who hated him and his message.

D) His boldness and Bluntness would eventually cost him his life –

1) Told Herod he was in sin for having his brother's wife.

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" **John Protests: You should be baptizing me**

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Question: Why did Jesus get Baptized?

A) John's Baptism was a baptism of repentance – Jesus was sinless – nothing to repent of.

B) John recognizes that – this is not right – you should Baptize me

C) Jesus says Permit it to be so that all righteousness may be fulfilled.

This is what that means:

A) In the same way that John's baptism was an outward way of people acknowledging they were ready to follow God

B) This was Jesus outward way of acknowledging the SAME THING

1) He as a man was ready to step out of the shadows of the carpenter shop – **and embrace HIS CALLING – EMBRACE THE MISSION.**

C) He came to fulfill the Righteousness of God – THE RIGHT PLAN OF GOD!

BAPTISM WAS THE PERFECT way to do that –

A) HE CAME TO IDENTIFY WITH US AS SINNERS.

B) Tempted in all ways as we are without sin – He became a man

1) Be that High Priest – who understands our weaknesses

C) So that we could later identify with HIS WORK FOR US – ON THE CROSS / RESURRECTION

1) BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES THAT

D) Buried with Christ in his death -

1) He rose – so that we could live and walk in the newness of life

E) It was the Right thing – the right time – Jesus was beginning His public ministry

His actions are validated by the response from Heaven: The Voice of the Father – Holy Spirit like a Dove

A) The TRINITY AT WORK

B) This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased

C) Think about that – 30 yrs in obscurity – shadows in the carpenter shop

Tradition tells us that Joseph died when Jesus was young – late teens – SINGLE MOM

A) JESUS takes up the family business – working to provide.

B) The one who spoke the world into existence is making things with his hands – splinters

C) Exhausted from a long day of work – crashed into bed

1) That was His life – YOUR LIFE MY LIFE

The FATHER SAYS: THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED

A) His HEART toward you and me in Jesus – We are His Beloved Sons and Daughters ...well pleased.

B) Who we are in Christ

C) Our desire to live for Jesus